
ALASKA MEDICAID REDESIGN + EXPANSION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

PROJECT QUESTIONS + ANSWERS

The Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) awarded a contract in June to a team of local and national health experts to help identify new opportunities for improving the Medicaid program. New Medicaid reform initiatives, and also options for alternative coverage models for the expansion population, will be developed under the Alaska Medicaid Redesign and Expansion Technical Assistance project.

The following questions have been raised by stakeholders during the course of the project. Answers and other relevant information are provided by DHSS below.

PROJECT KICKOFF WEBINAR | JULY 27, 2015

- ***Could you show the month-to-month planning calendar with the timelines for your deliverables?***

Specific information about this project's timeline, deliverables and stakeholder engagement opportunities are in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and the consultant's proposal, available on the [Healthy Alaska Plan Medicaid Redesign Initiative web page](#).

The primary deliverables will take the form of two reports:

1. Report on Medicaid Redesign Options & Recommendations — due January 15, 2016
2. Report on a Recommended 3-Year Action Plan and on a Recommended Evaluation Plan — due May 16, 2015

- ***How many opportunities are there for providers to participate and contribute?***

There are a few ways providers may participate and contribute. Individual providers and provider organizations may submit comments and suggestions directly via e-mail to Medicaid.Redesign@alaska.gov. Key provider associations will be invited to participate in discussions with DHSS leadership representing their membership. DHSS is also reaching out to provider associations and other organizations with offers to attend their fall conferences to present information on this project and seek input from participants.

If you are a member of an organization that might be interested in including a presentation on this project in an upcoming conference, please e-mail information about the conference to Medicaid.Redesign@alaska.gov.

All individuals interested in receiving regular e-mail updates about the project may sign up on: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/AKDHSS/subscriber/new?topic_id=12 (You will have to set up a personal account, which will only take a minute, then will be directed to a page listing initiatives from which you may sign up for updates — scroll down that page to the “Medicaid” category, and select “Medicaid Redesign”).

- ***Will this project’s timeline (Medicaid Redesign + Expansion Technical Assistance) impact or delay DHSS’s implementation of Medicaid expansion on September 1, 2015?***

No. Medicaid expansion begins September 1, 2015. DHSS is currently moving forward through a process separate from the Redesign project to meet the September timeline for Medicaid expansion implementation. The draft Medicaid state plan amendment for expansion is currently available on-line at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Pages/default.aspx>

The timeline for the technical assistance project provides for development of redesign initiatives that improve the entire Medicaid program, including for the expansion population. It will not affect the enrollment process.

- ***What is the cost of Medicaid to the state by 2030 and how are we paying for it? (\$6.2 billion by MESA study)?***

Detailed information about current projected costs is available in the most recent Long Term Forecast of Medicaid Enrollment and Spending in Alaska (MESA) Update report from Evergreen Economics, published in March 2015. Note that the MESA projections for 2030 have come down significantly in recent years (from the much earlier projected amount referenced in the question), due primarily to actual cost reductions the department has already experienced as the result of earlier and current reform efforts (see page 19 of the MESA Report).

Current MESA Report: http://dhss.alaska.gov/fms/documents/mesa/mesa%202014-34_sfy2015.pdf

Prior-Year MESA Reports: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/fms/Pages/home.aspx>

- ***Are there physician specific strategies for reform that are being considered?***

As we begin the process, we do not have a pre-defined specific list of strategies to start with, but our technical assistance consultants (Agnew::Beck, HMA and Milliman) are developing a list of options to explore in the environmental scan and first round of analysis. The team is interested in considering the full range of reforms, including provider payment methods, participation of providers around the state, provider education, and other options conducive to a state with a considerable rural population.

***See Questions & Answers regarding Medicaid Expansion Eligibility & Enrollment
Starting on the Next Page***

Questions about Medicaid expansion eligibility and enrollment. *Note: This project does not directly address the Medicaid eligibility changes and associated enrollment process that will take effect September 1. DHSS is currently developing information for the public and training opportunities for providers and other partners regarding those changes. Because there was significant interest expressed during the webinar in that process the answers to those specific questions are provided here, but those interested in learning more should check the [DHSS Medicaid Expansion web page](#) periodically for more information.*

- ***What categories of individuals will become eligible for enrollment (such as adult, elder, youth)?***

The typical newly-eligible Alaskan will be a single or married adult without dependent children and whose income is at or below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). For an individual without dependents, this would be approximately \$20,328 in annual income; for a married couple, \$27,492.

- ***When will Alaska citizens get coverage, if they are eligible under Medicaid Expansion?***

Coverage will begin in the month of enrollment. An applicant who applies on any day in September, for example, will be given coverage as of September 1. The Division of Public Assistance (DPA) in DHSS will provide more detailed information on enrollment and eligibility soon, in time for the implementation of Medicaid expansion beginning September 1.

- ***Where can I find out more information about expanded eligibility for Medicaid or how to apply?***

The Division of Public Assistance in DHSS handles Medicaid enrollment, and is in the process of developing information for applicants and training for providers and other partners. The training will include information about how to apply, what formats the application process will include, and more information about helping people enroll. That information will be available on the Division of Public Assistance and on the Healthy Alaska Plan websites.

- ***Can clients apply now and be placed on a waitlist?***

No, there is not a waitlist. Medicaid applications for the expansion population will be accepted starting in September. Clients who apply before September who do not meet current Medicaid eligibility requirements would receive a denial of their application until the new eligibility standards take effect on September 1.

- ***Will DPA be using the online ARIES system, long-form applications, and/or other formats? Will the Gen50c application be streamlined?***

The ARIES on-line self-service application portal will be available for the expansion population beginning in September. The on-line Federally Facilitated Marketplace will be another way people may apply beginning in November. People will still be able to use the paper application to apply as well. The Gen50c paper Medicaid application will not change. The information gathered through the on-line systems will be the same as what is on the Gen50c

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- ***Is the 5-year U.S. residency requirement for Medicaid enrollment waived for non-U.S. citizens?***

DHSS is not making any other changes to the Medicaid program at this time, and the current 5-year residency requirement will remain in place for anyone enrolling in Medicaid who is not a U.S. citizen.

- ***Should providers focus on beginning enrollment in November, when it is expected that healthcare.gov will be able to determine Alaska Medicaid eligibility?***

The state will be ready in September to accept applications from the newly-eligible population, and encourages those with health care needs to consider applying as soon as possible in order to have those needs covered. In November, when open enrollment in the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (healthcare.gov) begins for 2016, there will be a great deal of outreach and assistance available through the federally funded healthcare navigator program. We anticipate that more individuals will be engaged at that time through that process.

- ***Is CAMA (the Chronic and Acute Medical Assistance program) being eliminated, in light of more people being eligible for Medicaid?***

The state-funded CAMA program will not be immediately eliminated, but part of the Healthy Alaska Plan is to transition individuals currently on CAMA who are newly eligible for Medicaid off of the CAMA program and onto Medicaid, with projected state cost savings due to this shift. The experience of other states is that it is not feasible to eliminate CAMA-type programs entirely, as some people will not be eligible for Medicaid, but there is an opportunity to reduce the program as Medicaid is an option for more people. For example, those who do not meet the 5-year residency requirement (see question above) can receive services through Alaska's CAMA program now. At this time there is not a plan to eliminate the program so that it can continue to support the very small population using CAMA who would not be eligible for Medicaid expansion.